DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 125 246 FL 007 270

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TITLE The Object Complement in "Bahasa Malaysia." Colorado Research in Linguistics, No. 4.
INSTITUTION Colorado Univ., Boulder. Dept. of Linguistics.
PUB DATE May 74
NOTE 27p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Deep Structure; Descriptive Linguistics; Form Classes (Languages); *Indonesian; Indonesian Languages; *Linguistic Theory; *Malay; *Structural Analysis; Surface Structure; *Transformation Generative Grammar
IDENTIFIERS *Bahasa Malaysia; *Object Complementation

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THE OBJECT COMPLEMENT IN BAHASA MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Together with a study of object complements, a succinct description of the Malay classifier construction is given. Object complementation is studied in a generative-transformational framework. For sentence object complements, four types of surface structure are proposed, but it is claimed that two types of deep structure trees underlie the sentence object complement construction. Informants for the study were Miss Noraini Aziz, of Kuala Selangor (Selangor State) and Miss Latifah Abdol Latif, of Alor Gajah (Malacca State).

1. Object complements can be simple--a single noun phrase, the lower branch of a derivational tree, and immediately dominated by a VP node--or complex: an S or an NP which itself dominates an S, all attached to the VP node of the matrix sentence:

1. Saya beli sebuah kapal terbang.
   I buy a ship fly
   'I bought an airplane.'
2. John tahu presiden itu salah.
   John know president the wrong
   'John knows that the president was wrong.'

We will deal first with the simple case; the more complex type of object complement will be treated following this.

1.1. The following is the formula for a noun phrase in Malay: noun head + (adjective) + (determiner).

buku merah itu
book red the
'the red book'

If a relative clause is inserted into the NP, the order is: noun head + relative pronoun + clause + (determiner).

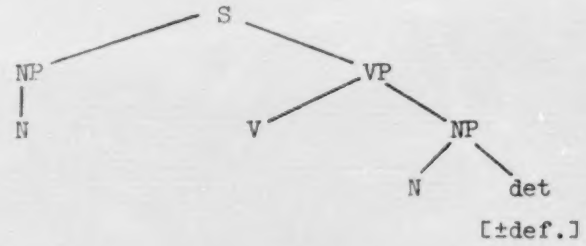
3. Saya lihat buku yang merah itu.
   I see book which red the
   'I see the red book.'
4. Saya lihat buku yang dia ada itu.
   I see book that he have the
   'I saw the book that he has.'

The determiners in Malay are ini (the-this-these) and itu (the-that-those). They are not obligatory. Details for the use of the determiners are not given here.

Plurality in the noun is indicated either by reduplicating the noun (e.g. buku buku: 'books') or by using a preceding quantifier indicative of plurality such as a cardinal number above one or adjectives like banyak 'many', semua 'all'.

The verb is not marked for person, number or tense, although the sentence, or the larger context, usually make these features clear.

1.2. The deep structure of sentences containing a noun phrase at the last level of derivation and immediately dominated by a VP node is very straightforward:



Dia ada buku saya.
he has book my
'He has my book.'

1.3. The surface structure of such sentences corresponds to the deep structure; nevertheless, observe the following sentences:

5. Saya mahu ubi kentang.
I want potato
'I want potatoes'.

6. Saya mahu sebiji ubi kentang.
   I want a potato
   'I want a potato.'

7. Saya mahu lapan biji ubi kentang.
   I want eight potato
   'I want eight potatoes.'

8. Bawa kan saya sudu itu.
   bring to me spoon that
   'Bring me that spoon.'

9. Bawa kan saya sebatang sudu.
   bring to me a spocn
   'Bring me a spoon.'

10. Bawa kan saya lapan batang sudu.
    bring to me eight spoon
    'Bring me eight spoons.'

1.4. We note that sentences 7 and 10 each has a Malay word without an English equivalent. The Malay words in question, which will be referred to as 'classifiers', appear also in sentences 6 and 9, translated by the indefinite article 'a'. Further investigation shows that classifiers appear generally before nouns whose determiner is a number (the indefinite article in Malay is identical to the number one) and before unmarked nouns.

The classifiers differ for animate and inanimate nouns. Two classifiers are used with animate nouns: ekor (literally 'tail') is used for animals, while orang (literally 'person') is used for humans:

11. Dia menangkap seekor[1] ikan.
he catch a CL. fish
'He caught a fish.'

12. Saya lihat lima ekor burung.
I see 5 CL. bird
'I see five birds.'

13. Saya ada seorang anak.
I have a CL. child
'I have a child.'

14. Saya tolong seorang penuntut.
I help a CL. student
'I helped a student.'

As for inanimate nouns, the classifiers differ according to various criteria. The shape of the object, the kind of container the object is put in, and the dominant character of the object are the three major categories which could be distinguished from the available corpus.

1.41. In the corpus which was used, nine classifiers refer to the shape of the noun they qualify.

helai is used for thin and pliable objects:

15. Saya cabut sehelai rambut.
I pull one CL. hair
'I pulled out one hair.'

16. Gunting sehelai kertas.
cut a CL. paper
'Cut a piece of paper!'

17. Dia beli sehelai kain.
I buy a CL. fabric
'I bought (buy) a piece of fabric.'

biji is used with small round objects:

18. Saya mahu sebiji ubi kentang.
I want a CL. potato
'I want a potato.'

19. Ada sebiji botol.
there is a CL. bottle
'There is a bottle.'

20. Bawa kapada saya sebiji pinggan.
bring to I a CL. plate
'Bring me a plate.'

butir is also used for small and round objects:

21. Saya pecahkan tiga butir telur.
I break 3 CL. egg
'I broke three eggs.'

22. Mereke buat sebutir bom.
they construct one CL. bomb
'They construct a bomb.'

butir is also used with 'atom'. The informants do not seem to make a clear cut distinction between biji and butir. Noraini hesitated

between the two for 'egg', and finally said that both are possible but butir is better. Another classifier for round objects--papan--was mentioned, but no examples acceptable to both informants were found.

The classifier ketul is used for small, solid objects. There are various English equivalents to ketul.

23. Saya beli seketul keju.
I buy a CL cheese
'I bought a piece of cheese.'

24. Saya baling seketul batu.
I throw a CL. stone
'I threw a stone.'

25. Potong seketul daging.
cut a CL. meat
'Cut a piece of meat!'

26. Saya beli seketul kayu.
I buy a CL wood
'I bought a block of wood.'

Keping is used for flat objects:

27. Beri saya sekeping kuih.
give I one CL. cookie
'Give me a cookie!'

28. Dia bawa sekeping papan.
he bring one CL. plank
'He brings a plank.'

batang is used with long hard objects:

29. Dia ambil sebatang sudu.
he take a CL spoon
'He took a spoon.'

30. Kami tanam lapan batang pokok.
we plant 8 CL tree
'We planted 8 trees.'

31. Saya lihat sebatang jalan yang berbatu.
I see a CL. road which rocky
'I saw a rocky road.'

32. Dia beri saya sebatang rokok.
he give I a CL. cigarette
'He gave me a cigarette.'

batang was also used in examples involving a stick, a pencil, a telephone pole, a bamboo rod, and other things of this kind.

potong is used to translate English 'slice'.

33. Beri saya sepotong kek.
give I a CL cake
'Give me a slice of cake!'

34. Beri saya sepotong daging.
give I a CL. meat
'Give me a slice of meat!'

jalur is used for mounds of earth.

35. Ada sejalur batas diseberang sana.
be a CL. ridge over there
'There is a ridge over there.'

36. Mereka berjalan diatas sejalur permatang.
they walk on a CL. river bank
'They walk on a river bank.'

1.42. Some nouns which refer to containers are used as the classifier for measured quantities of something.

sudu means 'spoon'; it is also used as the classifier with the meaning 'spoonful'.

37. Beri saya sesudu aiskrim.
give I a CL ice cream
'Give me a scoop of ice cream!'

38. Beri saya sesudu kuah.
give I a CL gravy
'Give me a spoonful of gravy!'

mangkuk means 'bowl'; it is used also as the classifier for foods put or served in a bowl.

39. Dia makan semangkuk salad untuk makan tengah hari.
she eat a CL salad for meal middle day
'She ate a salad for lunch.'

cawan means 'cup'. It is used also as a classifier for liquids or foods put or served in a cup.

40. Dia minum secawan susu.
she drink a CL milk
'She drinks a cup of milk.'

When 'cup' is itself a head noun, it requires the classifier buah; the reference here is to the cup as a container and not to its contents.

botol means 'bottle'. It is used also as a classifier for the contents of a bottle.

41. Saya ada sebotol susu.
I have a CL milk
'I have a bottle of milk.'

pinggan 'dinner plate' is used as a classifier for the contents of a large plate.

42. Beri saya sepinggan kek.
give I a CL pie
'Give me a plate of pie!'

piring 'luncheon plate' is used as a classifier for the contents of a small plate or a saucer.

43. Beri saya sepiring kek.
give I a CL pie
'Give me a saucer of pie!'

genggam 'grip' is used to express the English concept of 'handful', 'fistfull'.

44. Beri saya segenggam pasir.
give I a CL sand
'Give me a handful of sand.'

45. Beri saya segenggam beras
give I a CL rice
'Give me a handful of rice!'

cubit means 'a pinch'. It is used also as a classifier to express a quantity that can be grasped between two fingers.

46. Beri saya secubit garam.
give I a CL salt
'Give me a pinch of salt!'

bungkus is used for something wrapped or packaged; it is often translated by the English 'package'.

47. Saya beli sebungkus rokok.
I buy a CL cigarette
'I bought a pack of cigarettes.'

48. Saya mahu dua bungkus nasi.
I want 2 CL rice
'I want two packages of rice.'

buntil means 'bag'. It is also used as a classifier for the contents of a bag.

49. Dia beli sebuntil ubi kentang.
he buy a CL potato
'He bought a bag of potatoes.'

1.43. Some classifiers which are used with objects related by a single dominant character.

bilah is used with objects having a cutting edge.

50. Dia beli sepuluh bilah pisau.
he buy ten CL knife
'He bought ten kitchen knives.'

51. Dia gunakan sebilah parang untuk menebang pokok.
he use a CL axe for cut tree
'He is using an axe to cut down trees.'

pucuk is used for weapons, excluding those with a cutting edge.

52. Dia ada sepucuk senapang dirumahnya.
he have a CL. gun at house his
'He has a gun at home.'

1.44. Other classifiers appear to be used with only one specific noun.

bidang is used with tanah 'land'.

53. Saya beli sebidang tanah.
I buy a CL. land
'I bought a piece of land.'

kuntum appears only with bunga 'flower'.

54. Dia beli empat kuntum bunga yang cantek.
she buy four CL. flower which beautiful
'She bought 4 beautiful flowers.'

1.45. One classifier having wide use seems to be used whenever the object does not fit obviously into any other category, or when the speaker does not know what the proper classifier for a given object is. This 'general' classifier is buah.

55. Saya beli sebuah kapal terbang.
I buy a CL. ship fly
'I bought a plane.'

56. Dia beli sebuah mentol lampu.
he buy a CL. lightbulb
'He buys a lightbulb.'

57. Ada tiga buah pasu bunga diatas tiga buah meja.
have three CL. flower pot on three CL. table
'There are three vases on three tables.'

58. Mereka buat tiga buah radio.
they construct three CL radio
'They construct three radios.'

59. Dia bubuh sebuah papantanda pada tiga buah pintu.
she put a CL sign on three CL door
'She put a sign on three doors.'

60. Saya lihat sebuah buku yang berwarna merah.
I see a CL book which has color red
'I saw a red book.'

buah was also used in many other examples involving plates,(object and not content) stories, records, houses, cars, beds, pistols, games, and other nouns of the most diverse meanings.

1.5. The above list of classifiers is not exhaustive; nevertheless the list does contain the most common classifiers. Note that classifiers are not uniquely related to object complements. Any indefinite noun, object complement or not, may have a classifier. In addition, classifiers are not obligatory with indefinite nouns. About two thirds of the examples in the corpus containing an indefinite noun have a classifier, a number which might be higher than normal due to the fact that the informant was aware of my interest in them. Classifiers are thus optional, but only when the determiner of the noun is 'one' or 'a'.

61. Saya beri dia buku.
I give she book
'I gave her a book.'

We can therefore consider the insertion of classifiers as an optional transformation operating on deep structures having a [-def] (or [+indef.]) marked noun, in the following way:[2]

$$\text{S.D.} \quad X - \left[N - \overset{\text{det}}{[\text{-def}]} \right]_{NP} - Y$$

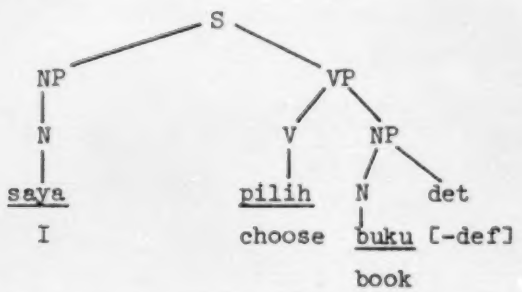
$$\qquad\quad 1 \qquad\quad 2 \qquad\quad 3 \qquad\quad 4$$

$$\text{S.C.} \quad 1 \quad CL + \quad 2 \qquad \emptyset \qquad\quad 4$$

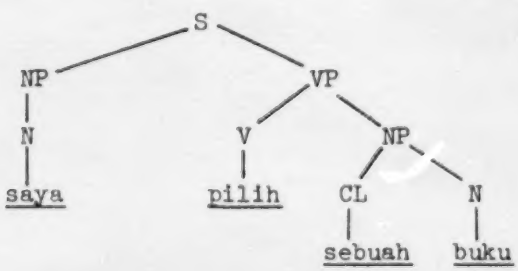
In the surface, the CL (classifier) is replaced by the appropriate classifier according to the semantic features of 2.

62. Saya pilih sebuah buku.
I choose a CL book
'I chose a book.'

Deep Representation



Application of the Classifier Insertion Transformation



Simple object complements in Malay are easy to account for and require no further investigation. As for the Malay classifier construction, it would be interesting to compare it with analogous constructions in neighboring languages such as Thai, but also Khmer, Annamese, Burmese, and Chinese, but this has not been done here.

2. We turn now to a study of the sentence object complement.

2.1. While relative pronouns introduce relative clauses, complementizers introduce complement sentences, that is, they are markers of the complement sentence. Five complementizers appear in the corpus used for this study: untuk, bahawa, supaya, bagi, and yang.

The words untuk and yang do not function uniquely as complementizers.[3] They can therefore not be taken as always being markers of a following complement. Untuk is also used to introduce purpose clauses:

63. Dia pergi kekedai untuk membeli buku.
he go to shop for buy book
'He goes to the shop to buy books.'

64. Dia datang untuk meminta pertolongan.
he come for ask help
'He came for help.'

Yang is used also to introduce a relative clause:

65. Saya lihat sebuah buku yang berwarna merah.
I see a CL. book which color red
'I see a red book.'

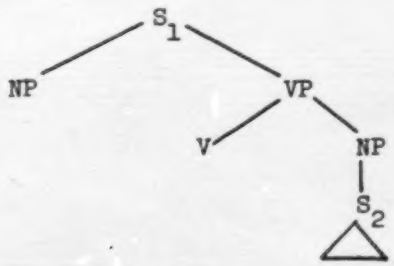
Sentences 3 and 4 also contain examples of yang as a relativizer.

2.2. There are two types of deep structure for complementation, depending on the presence (vs. absence) of an indirect object.

The following sentence does not have an indirect object:

66. John berkata yang perkerja pekerja itu sedang mogok.
John say that worker worker the (aspect) strike
'John said that the workers were on strike.'

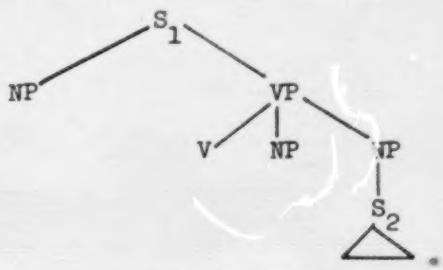
The deep structure of this sentence is:



Sentence 67, on the other hand, has an indirect object:

67. John beritahu saya yang pekerja pekerja itu sedang mogok.
John tell I that worker the (aspect) strike
'John told me that the workers were on strike.'

The deep structure of this sentence is:



2.3 Although deep structure phrase-markers differ only in the presence or absence of the indirect object NP, in surface structure phrase-markers another distinction appears, namely the presence (vs. absence) of a subject. Object complements that have their own

subject are called clausal complements, while those which do not are called non-clausal complements. Since this differentiation is one of surface structure, we still have only two basic types of phrase-markers in the deep structure, corresponding to four types of surface structure:

1 NP V [NP VP]$_S$

2 NP V NP [NP VP]$_S$

3 NP V [VP]$_S$

4 NP V NP [VP]$_S$

Sentences 64 and 65 above illustrate types 1 and 2 respectively--sentences 66 and 67 below illustrate types 3 and 4 respectively.

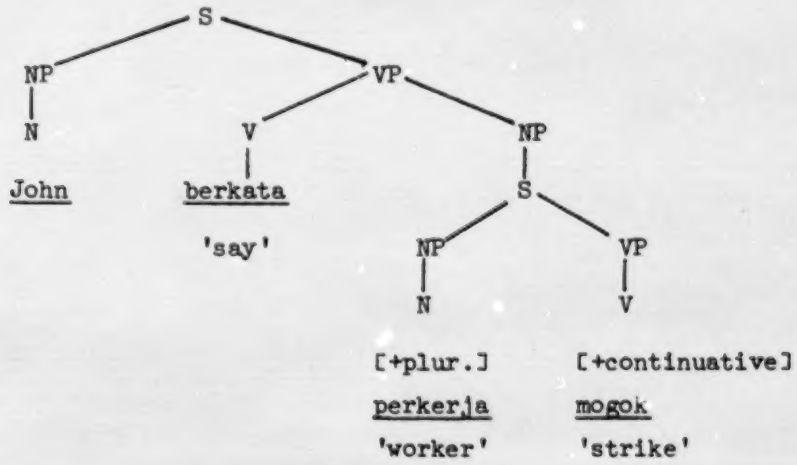
68. Dia meminta untuk menjadi saorang ahli.
he ask COMP become one CL member
'He asks to become a member.'

69. Dia benarkan kanak kanak itu main.
he let child child the play
'He let the children play.'

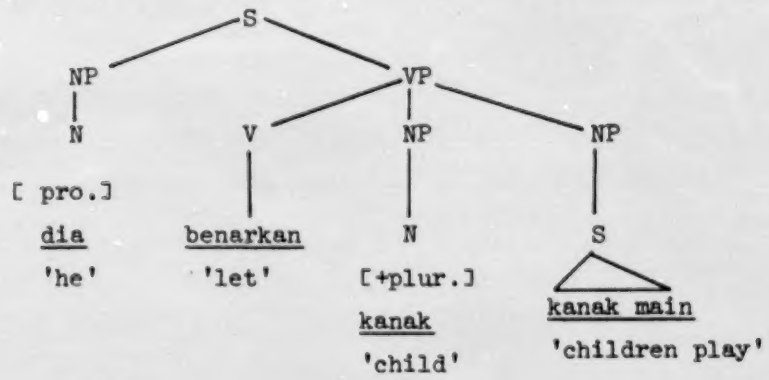
2.4. Of these four types of surface structure, 1 and 3 on the one hand, and 2 and 4 on the other hand, have identical deep structures. 3 and 4 differ from 1 and 2 only by the absence in the surface structure of the subjects of the embedded complements. On the surface, sentence 67 is identical to sentence 66, but their deep structures are different. The NP after the main verb in 66 is the subject of the embedded complement, while the NP after the main verb in 69 is the indirect object of the matrix sentence. It appears, indeed, from the deep structures of sentences 66 and 69 that the NP corresponding to

pekerja 'worker' is immediately dominated by an S node, while in the NP corresponding to kanak 'child' is immediately dominated by a VP node:

Deep Structure of Sentence 66:



Deep Structure of Sentence 69:



By definition "a noun phrase immediately dominated by S will be called the deep structure subject of a sentence"[4]; similarly, "a noun phrase immediately dominated by the verb phrase of a deep structure is the object of that verb phrase"[5]. Since sentence 69 shows two NP nodes dominated by the main verb VP, and we recognize the embedded sentence as object complement, the NP dominating kanak has to function as indirect object. The justification for an S dominated by an NP node -- for an S to be an NP -- (the deep structure shows S as daughter of the NP and not of the VP), is found in the possibility of passivizing the sentence, since "one of the most important tests for the string types referred to as noun phrases is the passive test...the constituents inverted by the passive transformation are noun phrases".[6]

69' Kanak kanak itu dibenarkan main olehnya
children the PAS. let play by him
'The children are allowed to play by him.

2.5. The next question concerns the subject of the embedded complement, absent from the surface structure. It appears in fact as already suggested by the deep structure representation of sentence 69 -- that the subject is identical to the indirect object NP of the matrix sentence, and has been later deleted by the identical noun phrase deletion transformation, as the identity condition was fulfilled. The identical NP deletion transformation can be formalized as follows:[2]

SD: X NP_a [V (NP)]$_a$ Y [NP VB Z]$_S$ W

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

condition $\{^{2}_{4}\}_{a}$ = 6

SC: 1 2 3 4 5 Ø 7 8 9

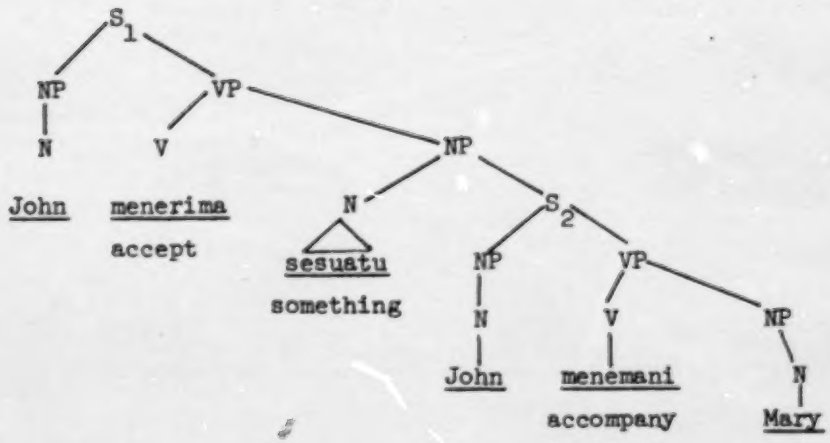
As an illustration, we can use the sentence:

70. John menerima untuk menemani Mary.

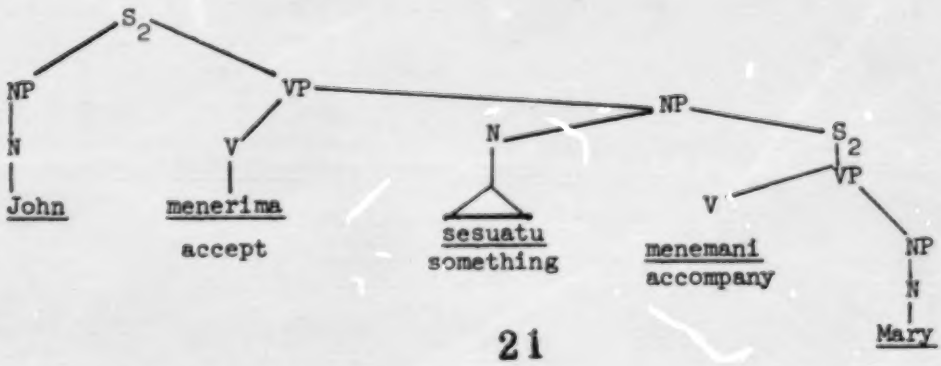
John accept to accompany Mary

'John agreed to accompany Mary.'

The deep structure of this sentence is represented as follows:



After application of the identical NP deletion transformation, we obtain:



As a result S_2 dominates only one node i.e. VP. We can therefore eliminate S according to the pruning convention proposed by Ross.[7]

On this model, we can now account for sentence

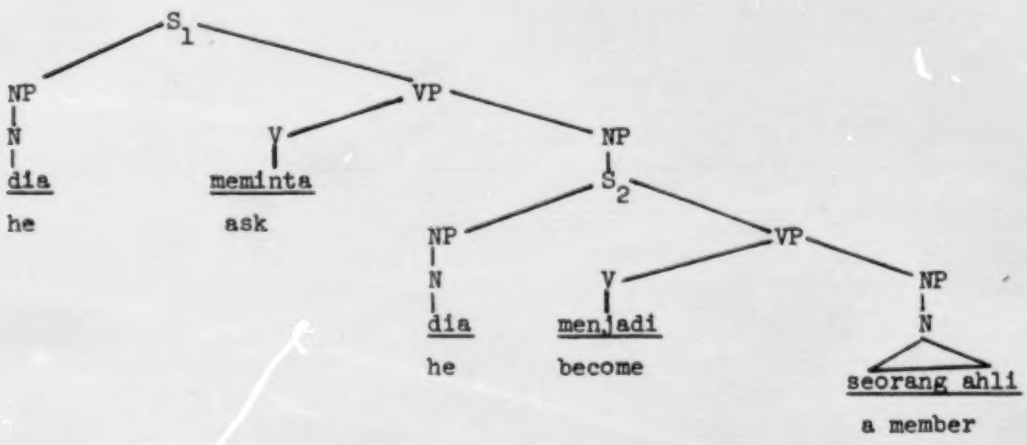
68. Dia meminta untuk menjadi seorang ahli.
he ask COMP become a CL member
'He asked to become a member.'

The sentence contains a non-clausal complement, but in deep structure the embedded sentence complement has a subject which is dia 'he'. The proof for this claim lies in the synonymy of the following two sentences.[8]

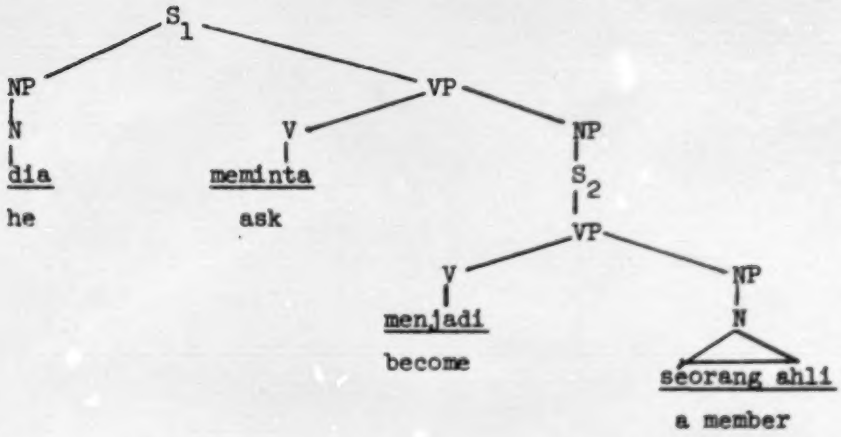
68. Dia meminta untuk menjadi seorang ahli.
he ask COMP become a CL member
'He asked to become a member.'

68'. Dia meminta supaya dia jadi seorang ahli.
he ask COMP he become a CL. member
'He asked that he become a member.'

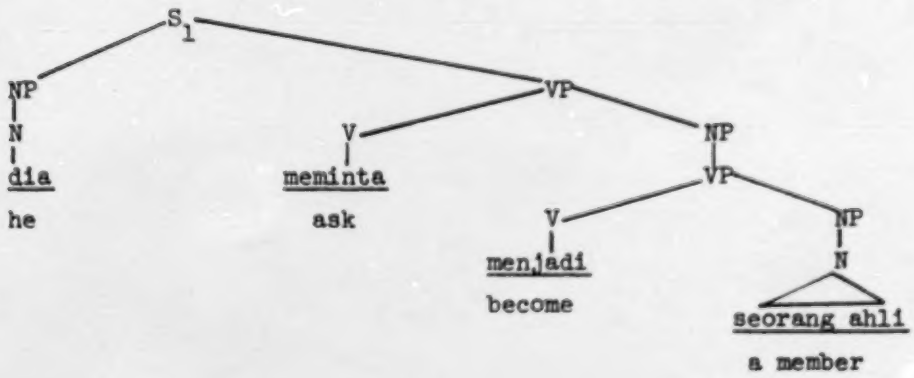
The deep structure of 68 (and 68') is then:



The identical NP deletion transformation applies:



The S node is eliminated by the tree-pruning convention:[9]



The surface structure of sentences with nonclausal complements (that is, sentences in which the subject of the embedded complement is not present) is thus radically different from the surface structure of sentences with clausal complements. There is no such opposition in deep structure; therefore, of the four surface structure types (presence of an indirect object, absence of an indirect object,[10] clausal complement, nonclausal complement), two only are present in deep structure.

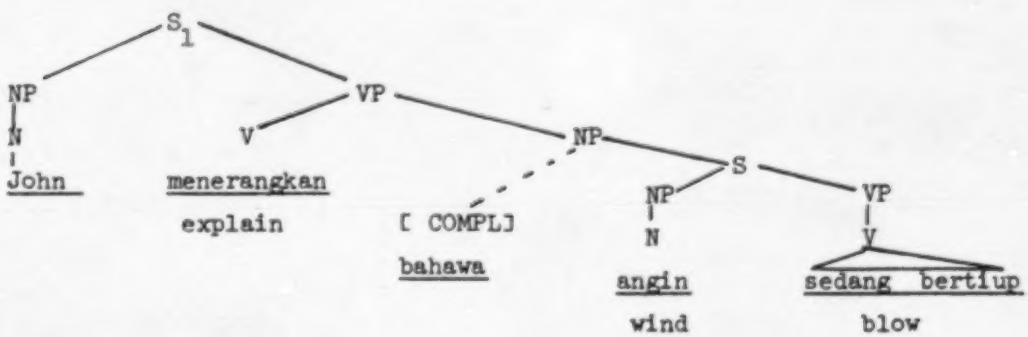
2.6. It is yet to be mentioned that complementizers are optional, and in some sentences no complementizer can appear.

71. Dia tolong mereka belajar Bahasa Malaysia.
she help them learn language Malaysia
'She helps them to learn Bahasa Malaysia.'

No account is given here of the syntactic or semantic differences of complementizers. It is quite possible that complementizers are governed by semantic features of the verb (similar to the distinction in Indo-European languages between verbs of command, verbs of volition, etc.). Complementizers do not appear in the deep structure of the sentences, they are introduced by transformational rules. Their function is to introduce an embedded complement and they are therefore redundant, optional elements. The complementizer adjunction rule, which introduces the element COMP. into the P. marker, is therefore optional. It can be formulated as:

SD.	X		Y	$[S]_{NP}$		Z
	1	2	3	4		5
SC.	1	2	3	[COMPL.]	4	5

72. John menerangkan bahawa angin sedang bertiup.
John explain COMP wind (aspect) blow
'John explained that the wind was blowing.'



3. In this paper we have shown that classifiers in Bahasa Malaysia are introduced by an optional transformation operating on deep structures having a [-def] marker noun, according to the semantic features of that noun. To account for sentence complementation in Bahasa Malaysia, we proposed two types of deep structure corresponding to four types of surface structure. The two types of deep structure differ only in the presence or absence of an indirect object NP. In the surface, another listinction appears, namely the presence or absence of an object in the sentence complement. In order to complete this study, a detailed analysis of complementizers needs to be undertaken together with an analysis of sentence complements having functions other than object.

Notes

1. When the determiner is 'a' or 'one', the classifier is prefixed by se-, an alternate shape of the morpheme satu, 'one'.

2. The structural description, structural change model follows Roderick A. Jacobs and Peter S. Rosenbaum. English Transformational Grammar, Waltham, Massachusetts: Blaisdell, 1968.

3. This might be true also of other complementizers, but if it is so, it was not discovered in the analysis done for this paper.

4. Jacobs and Rosenbaum, Op. Cit., p. 71.

5. Jacobs and Rosenbaum, Op. Cit. p. 72.

6. Jacobs and Rosenbaum, Op. Cit. p. 38.

7. John R. Ross, 'A proposed rule of tree-pruning' in David Reibel and Sanford Schane, eds. Modern Studies in English. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969.

8. Chomsky in Aspects of the Theory of Syntax (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1965) suggested that no item can be irrevocably deleted by a transformation.

9. Note that the NP node dominating the embedded sentence S_2 is not pruned out because a transformation introducing the complementizer untuk 'to, for' as daughter of NP (or right sister of S_2) has previously applied.

10. Instead of these traditional categories, which often prove to be inadequate in linguistic analysis, we could express the distinctions by opposing the case where the main VP dominates one NP to the case where two NP's branch from the main VP.